4: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1902 FL11 Lua FL11

poisoned arrows have fallen into disuse; there was a medicine man in Ganda country named Opondo who used to make and vend the poison. The Kamasia people also had an arrow poison maker. The poison is said to be composed of snake poison and certain herbs. Nearly all of these people wear sandals of a single thickness of skin when travelling.

Musical instruments.—Their harps have eight strings and are the same as those of Northern Kavirondo (Figs. 8, 10); the drum is covered with cow hide; they are called *Tidan*. Their drums are also similar to those of Northern Kavirondo and are called *Bil* (Fig. 9). The women also make hand harps of calabash shells called *Odwado*.

Fig. 8.—Harp: Nilotic Kavirondo.

Fig. 9.—Native of Uganda playing on drum called *Mandindingo*, Gambia.

Fig. 10.—Harp: Nilotic Kavirondo.

Tobacco and bhang.—These people smoke and chew tobacco; only a few take snuff. Both sexes smoke and chew tobacco. *Bhang* or Indian hemp is smoked separately in a water pipe. Only men smoke bhang. Young fighting men are not allowed to smoke it.

Tembo or pombe.—This is made from sorghum or millet either singly or mixed. Both sexes drink; young women do not drink with the men, the old women however do so.

242 land, " Mbora." A piece of land weed infested in the middle of cultivation is called " sino," and the Luo are alive to the menace [678] this neglected patch is to the crops surrounding it. A man who allows " sino " to endanger his neighbours' crops is very unpopular.

STATUS OF WOMEN:

SL1 The position of women amongst the Luo is one of great influence, 773 in spite of many things which show that they are not regarded as the equal of the men. While they have nothing in their creation stories which gives the male such pre-eminence as is given in the Hebrew account of creation in the second chapter of Genesis, yet even in their stories it is the male which is created first. The origin of the female is surrounded with mystery, none have any clear account of her origin. But it is significant that the name by which the first woman is known to many of the Luo is ALOO. LOO or LOWO is the stem meaning earth or soil, and there is undoubtedly some connection in their minds between the fruitful soil and woman. But though her origin is surrounded in mystery, she soon is made to carry the responsibility for the fact that the sons of men have got to work. Lest the story should be unknown to some it is worth while repeating it here. According to the creation story, the first man to be created was one called Podho. To him the Creator (called Nyasaye) gave a magic hoe, which worked by itself, requiring no arm to wield it. With the hoe Nyasaye gave Podho a command that he was never to attempt to do any work with it himself. If he should disobey this command then the hoe would lose its virtue and cease to work unaided. This happened before the advent of ALOO (sometimes called also MIHAHA). When eventually Podho was given ALOO, he gave the hoe over to her care, telling her at the same time of the command which Nyasaye had laid down. For a time all went well. When they wanted any digging to be done all they had to do was to take the hoe out to the site, show it what they wanted it to dig and leave it to do the work. In the evening it was brought in again. But one day curiosity was too much for ALOO. She felt that she must feel what it was like to turn up a few sods. So she picked up the hoe and with it turned up a little soil. Then becoming suddenly afraid she dropped the hoe and went home, but did not tell her husband, Podho. However she was unable to hide what she had done, for in the evening when they went to bring in the hoe, it lay where she had dropped it, and had done no work. Then the voice of Nyasaye said that as they were now so clever that they know how to dig, never more would the hoe dig for them. So to this day woman is blamed as the one through whose wrongdoing the curse of work came to men.

● SL1 However the tradition came into existence it reflects the common tendency of many creation stories to put the blame on the woman,

562 and possibly was invented to keep women in subjection. It has only partly succeeded. Something more potent than a creation story is required to keep many of the LUO women down. Two illustrations suffice to show this. The first in Church. The collection is being [593] taken up, and a man finds himself without any cash. He crosses over to the women's side, whispers a few words to his wife, whereupon she gives him a cent for the collection. Like many a wife in other lands, she holds the purse strings. The second the Law Court. [594] A wife pleads for a divorce from her husband on the ground that he has become a polygamist. She gets her divorce.

584 Much of the apparent inequality is only apparent, not real. The thing which, more than any other, has been quoted as showing the inferior position accorded to women, is the manner in which girls are given in marriage. But this is not as much a matter of sex as of age. If it be true that girls are sometimes given in marriage without their wishes being consulted in the matter, it is also true that many a young man is provided with a wife without his wishes being consulted either. Not so long ago I asked a man what the girl to whom he was engaged was like. He replied that he had never seen her, that the marriage had been arranged by his father. This kind of thing is quite common. And it must not be forgotten that the girl's mother is taken into the fullest consultation when the question of her daughter's betrothal is raised. It is not decided by the men only. And generally there is some form of consultation with the girl. Long and bitter experience has taught the community that to force some girls beyond a certain point is only to lay up trouble for the future. Only three weeks ago a father came to me to ask me to try to mediate in his daughter's affairs. She had been betrothed when quite a young child to a man old enough to be her aged father. He had in due course taken her to wife, and there were two children by the union. 586 There she left him and consorted with another man, more nearly her own age. I saw the woman, went into the matter and found that the old man was so uncongenial to her, that even the fact that she had born him two children was not strong enough to reconcile her to her lot. She had much of my sympathy, though I could not condone the desertion of her children.

581 Not even the very strongest bonds can bind a woman who wishes to break them. The most binding form of betrothal known to the LUO, is that which is the outcome of an alliance between two families. The Luo have a proverb which runs " Osiep otho, to wat chotho." In English it would run " friendship dies, but relationship does not die." So, as in other lands, the heads of two Luo families may desire to 584 cement their friendship by ties of intermarriage. A feast is provided by one of the parties, generally by the one taking the initiative in

10: Roscoe M-5 (ca. 1900)1915
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constant activity in the field and home. The freedom with which the young women mingle with the men is striking, they may be seen among them, leaning on their shoulders when standing, as unrestrainedly as the men with men. The absence of clothing in no wise embarrasses them nor does it cause either sex a moment's thought; they are accustomed to this state of nature from childhood and feel no constraint in mingling freely together. They are extremely fond of ornaments and of painting themselves with different coloured clays, and often make patterns upon their bodies which they retain until the clay wears off. Their hair is often allowed to grow long, and youths frequently increase the length of it by twisting cords into it, greasing the whole with castor or other vegetable oil and rubbing red clay into it. Men and women mix freely together and often work in parties on the same field, singing songs as they work and keeping time with their hoes as they dig. Their homes in the hills are exposed and cold. Still, they do not appear to feel the cold winds and move about and work as freely as well-clothed tribes. As a tribe they combine agriculture with pastoral pursuits and their diet consists of milk and vegetables.

Origin of the tribe. According to their traditions they come from the north-west. Their ancestor Ramogi, they say, had seven sons named Kwenda, Nyakal, Owede, Nyadwat, Sakwa, Alego and Langho; and he adopted another son, Ugenya. Langho, they say, is the father of the Masai and Setik tribes. They trace their own descent from Owede who had two sons, Omwa and Sagam. We thus have two groups forming the tribe, as follows: Omwa, whose descendants formed eight clans; Sagam, whose descendants form seven.

The descendants of Omwa:

1. Dongo	2. Nyuto	3. Orando
4. Kwamudi	5. Nyamwogi	6. Ndalo
7. Ogenyo	8. Nyakwal	

The descendants of Sagam:

1. Pwonja	2. Hadodi	3. Waranjo
4. Ratreg	5. Wango	6. Monya
7. Nyamoda		

10: Roscoe M-5 (ca. 1900)1915
FL11 Luo FL11

783 of his village and lives in a hut with an old woman who attends to his wants, cooks for him and also feeds him, because he may not touch food with his han. . Separation lasts for three days, and on the fourth day a man who is himself a murderer, or who has at some time killed a man in battle, takes the murderer to a stream where he washes him all over. He then kills a goat and cooks the meat, takes four sticks and places a piece of meat on each stick and gives the man the meat to eat from each in turn. When the meat has been eaten, he gives him four pieces of porridge made into balls and put on the sticks. After this meal the goat-skin is cut into strips, one strip being put on the neck and one strip round each wrist of the murderer. This ceremony is performed by the two men who are alone at the river, and after it the murderer is free to return home. It is said that, until this ceremony is performed, the ghost cannot take its departure for the place of the dead, but hovers about the murderer.

428 **Inheritance.** It is usual for a son to inherit property. While a man is still in health, he makes known his wishes as to whom he desires to inherit his property, and his wishes will be observed. Should a son be too young to succeed to his father's estate at the time of death, the deceased man's brother manages the property until the son is old enough to take control. Should a man with property die intestate, the members of his clan elect one of his sons to be heir. There is no fixed law as to which son shall inherit. It is not a question of age nor may the son of a particular wife claim precedence over the sons of other wives, but the clan-members are at liberty to choose the man they consider the most suited for the office. Women never inherit or hold property. The father's stool and bracelet are given to the heir and are the insignia of lawful succession.

[562 921]

Marriage, Birth and Puberty.

582 **Marriage customs.** It was impossible to discover the ritual of marriage or the groups into which a man might or might not marry, all that could with certainty be learned being that there are exogamous divisions within the tribe.

16: Northcote G-5 (no date) 1907 FL11 Luo FL11

allow a man's head and shoulders to enter; the roof is of grass. Outside these again is the circle of huts, strongly built of sticks and grass and with the sides plastered with a mixture of dung and soil. Each married male in the village has his own hut, and besides this a hut for each wife and two smaller huts, one for his sons and another for his daughters, which latter live with an old woman, often their grandmother. The two sexes are kept rigidly apart, and though, as will be seen, the *Jaluo* notion of morality is scarcely the same as the European, there is little of the promiscuity of intercourse among the Kavirondo which is so noticeable a feature among the other Nilotic tribes of British East Africa.

As the sons grow up they marry and build houses in the father's village for themselves and their wives. The eldest son usually remains with his father for good and all, but as the other sons in turn become fathers of families, they often build villages for themselves near the paternal village; as often as not, however, the sons keep together after the father's death, the eldest becoming the head of the family.

There is a strict law of exogamy among the *Jaluo*, though a son may marry his father's wife if she is no blood relation of his; similarly two sisters are often simultaneously the wives of one man.

Their rule of inheritance, though apparently complicated, is really simple. The husband sets aside so many of his cattle to provide food for each wife, the chief or first wife naturally having a larger share than the rest. On his death the wife and the cattle set aside for her pass to her sons, her eldest son as the new *pater familias* again getting the larger share. If a man has no sons by the first wife but sons by another, all the property, including the first wife and her daughters, pass to these sons; if a man has no sons, all his property passes to his brother or nearest male blood relation; females can own no property, being themselves but chattels. On the death of a chief his power descends upon the eldest son of his first wife, even though his second or third wife may have borne him a son before the son by the first wife was born; *i.e.*, A is his first and chief wife and E his second. A may bear him two daughters, B and C, and then a son D. Though in the meanwhile E has borne him a son F, D will become chief in virtue of his mother's priority, even though he has an elder brother (F). But if D is not of fit age to govern, F may become chief, as a regency is too advanced an institution; and similarly if both D and F are infants, some elder blood relation, such as their eldest uncle, will succeed their father. This rule not unnaturally leads to much quarrelling, as, when the deposed heir grows up he often lays claim to rule, with disastrous results.

A great many formalities attend a Kavirondo marriage. As has been remarked above, exogamy is the strict rule. The young man having declared his choice to his father, the latter goes off to the girl's father and arranges the dowry. He then returns, and the intending bridegroom goes over with a bull or some grain as earnest money and particulars of the preliminary feast, an essential feature of this being an offering set aside for the sun-god, consisting of a little meat, part of a

19:Wilson E-5 (ca. 1950) 1960
FL11 Luo FL11

614 very large degree. Their family system remains strong and
178 largely unimpaired by the impact of Western civilization. The patriarch of the extended family unit, the *jokakuoro*, remains the local authority. Because a series of family groups together form a territorial unit, the sub-clan, the strength and solidity of the Luo family and lineage structure remain supreme. Obviously there have been changes. Basically, however, the changes are superficial.

● 582 The role of women in Luo society is a subordinate one. Indigenously they play no part in the major ceremonies or rituals and have never had political authority. They do not organize in age groups or societies as in other cultures, and remain primarily the property of their father and his lineage or, on marriage, the property of their husband and his clan.

595 Polygyny is still the ideal and goal of the majority of Luo men. A recent village survey showed that taking a sample of 744 homesteads, which varied between a simple monogamous family and the very large unit of the extended polygamous family, 55 per cent were monogamous units, of which 9 per cent had a leviratic wife or wives, thus making them socially polygamous units; 45 per cent were polygamous homesteads, of which 11 per cent had a leviratic wife or wives. Only 27 per cent of the total sample were found to be simple monogamous households, that is one in four of the family type associated with Western culture: a man, his wife and children. The remainder were either polygamous or had leviratic wives or were of the extended family type. Of this 27 per cent, moreover, it was the ideal of the vast majority to become polygamous later.

971 Education among the Jaluo has increased rapidly in recent years, and it was found in our sample that 63 per cent of the boys of school age were either at school or had been to school for more than one year. The figure was 30 per cent for the girls. Of the adult males, however, only 28 per cent had been to school, and of the married females, only 7 per cent. The standard attained, moreover, was not high. More than half the male

20:Omindo I-5 (ca. 1948) 1952
FL11 Luo FL11

source of much social rejoicing to discover that a married woman had been found to be a virgin. Such a bride was given a high prestige among the other women.

In the past, if a woman gave birth to an illegitimate child, her only chance of marriage was to an old man with a number of wives. There was no possibility of occupying the position of chief wife of the family; and the heads of cattle paid were much fewer. The child was taken by the man who legally married her, but she was not allowed to give birth in her own home. Everything was done to get rid of her as soon as possible.

Examples of such pregnancies are very common at present. But although social disapproval is still keenly felt, modern conditions have become more favourable to women in this situation, and an increasing number of them are being married to bachelors. Unlike some communities, no death punishment was ever given. If the occurrence takes place between close relatives the matter is kept secret; in the past, however, the couple could be exiled.

Modern Education and Adolescent Girls

Progress in the education of adolescent girls is hampered because the Luo people do not appreciate its suitability to the environment of their women. To the majority, modern education is associated with clerical work and the many other jobs that men take up after a school career. The position of girls in this scheme is not clearly envisaged.

The social importance attached to marriage is having to adapt itself to a prolonged school career and the raised age for marriage which this implies. An inability to appreciate schooling for girls is also based on a high esteem for the traditional education which it tends to interrupt and weaken.

20:Ominde I-5 (ca. 1948) 1952
FL11 Luo FL11

schooling of wives, but modern young women sometimes rebel against this ordered régime, choosing rather to do as they please in their new homes.

Since the introduction of the plough, the part played by men in the cultivation of the fields has greatly increased. Clearing and ploughing are now done by men, but planting and harvesting are still carried on largely by women.

Women's organizations. In the past, women's activities were limited in number. Apart from the communal dancing parties in which they took a great pride, there existed among certain related families councils to settle disputes and misconduct among women. This communal organization has tended to become weaker with the growing family individuality introduced by modern conditions.

While Christian influence has increased their freedom by releasing women from tribal prejudice and by widening the horizon of men's views, pagan women are still hampered from taking an active part in modern economic and social activities.

Women's organizations range from small religious groups to registered co-operative societies. The management of the co-operative societies is largely in the hands of Christian women. They are thus more progressive than their pagan neighbours, although the gap is rapidly narrowing owing to the influence exercised by Christian women upon the other women in the community.

The changing economy. Before the introduction of a money economy, the garden formed the basis of the economic life of women. Their transactions depended on garden produce which they bartered in exchange for live animals. The more industrious and economical thus acquired considerable wealth, supplementing garden

[Text continues on p.55]

21:Huxley O.T-5 (no date) 1960 FL11 Luo FL11

IV

After Mr. Onyango had spoken, others said their piece, and I asked the opinions of some of the women, who will never speak unless they are directly asked. One replied, through an interpreter, in these words:

'I was against consolidation. My own land was fertile and I did not want to lose it and have other land not as good as mine. I tried to persuade my husband. We had many arguments, and the peace of our house was destroyed. At last I saw that I must give in if our home was to become peaceful again. We exchanged gardens, and then I saw that the new gardens were as fertile as my own. Now the men are helping women on the land and this is something that has never happened before. Men and women are working together. This is because the men see that there is money in growing crops and that bigger crops will make them rich.'

A second woman—both were middle-aged—spoke after her.

'I was not of that opinion. I wanted consolidation before it came here. If you have land near your home, you can work to improve it. If it is a long way off, you cannot put on manure. I understood the value of manure by seeing crops grown by the Better Farmers. Before, I had four *shambas* and one was over a mile away. Now they are all together and near my home. There is only one difficulty. Our custom is, when a son gets married, he leaves his father's *shamba* to start one of his own. I do not want to break this custom, but now I have a married son and there is nowhere for him to go.'

And a third woman, rather older, added her piece.

'I was in favour of consolidation too. The boundaries of land have caused many disputes and quarrels amongst us. When there are fixed boundaries, these quarrels fade away. So I wanted consolidation before it came, and my husband agreed. Now I can farm properly and put manure on the *shamba*; we have a shed for the cattle to stay in at night. Besides that, my husband employs two men. When he goes away I supervise them and the work is not so hard. Men and women never worked together before. Now they do, and this